

Top Secret

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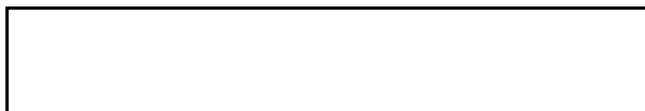
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USSR-US: The two face difficulties in the Law of
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USSR-US: The two countries face sizable difficulties in keeping a proposed Law of the Sea conference within manageable limits.

The US and USSR want a conference confined to three issues: the establishment of a 12-mile limit for the territorial sea, free passage through and over straits, and preferential fishing rights for coastal states. The less developed countries, however, appear to favor a conference with a broad agenda that would include the peaceful uses of the seabeds. The US and USSR oppose a broad agenda in which freedom of the sea issues might be bargained against seabeds issues. Some countries have maintained that all the issues involving the sea must be considered together.

US and Soviet experts have worked out the three basic articles of a convention, and are now canvassing other states on the subject. It is already evident that it will be difficult to get the Western countries to agree on the terms of a limited convention. Iceland and Canada have expressed reservations on the fisheries article. Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, and Denmark have commented adversely on the article dealing with the rights of free passage through international straits.

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